

## AFCCC-ADMIN

### Administrative materials

#### Collection

Selected and converted. American Memory, Library of Congress. 8

#### **CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT COLLECTION OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN CALIFORNIAInstructions to Workers**

The purpose of this undertaking is to collect and preserve the old-time music now in circulation in California, particularly the songs which are fast disappearing and which, for the most part, have never been printed or even written down, but have been passed on from one perer to another by rote. "California" folk music is understood to mean any traditional music, -- song or dance tune, -- now current in California; items from other states which deal with California life or history may be included. The investigation is not of course to be limited to perers whose native language is English. The minority groups in California have much to add that is of great interest.

We want to preserve a song:1) If it was widely current at an time, known to and sung by many people;2) If it has been known to several generations in a family;3) If it is an account of a true happening, with local details and place names, even if it was not known widely; or if it tells about the early days in general (lumber camps mining camps, the crossing of the plains; crimes, catastrophes; any local trade;4) If it is a special favorite and particularly good fun to sing.

We want to know what instruments are found in this region, and where any unusual ones may be examined; also names and addresses of perers on any folk instrument, particularly fiddlers who play for dances in the old fashion, and 5-string (not tenor) banjo players. Please note general type of instrument, and mention any odd feature about construction or perance which struck you particularly.

Local pride in the preservation of the cultural things that belong to the old days should be stimulated wherever possible, particularly in the minority groups. Remember that the Anglo-Saxon music which we are inclined to think of as the only "American" kind is a relatively recent importation on this continent, exactly as the Hungarian, Finnish and Armenian folk musics are. The Portuguese and Spanish have been in California three times as long as the "Americans".

It is a good idea to spend much time making friends among the older people who are likely to know songs or to have friends who know them. Don't feel that time spent in conversation about things apparently quite unconnected with songs is wasted, for it will make you seem less a stranger. A few

minutes of general conversation (don't scorn the weather as a topic!) should 9 always precede any explanation of the reason for your visit. A casual friendly, unhurried manner is disarming; a busy, efficient one creates suspicion.

When you find someone who knows a few songs, explain that the University of California is interested in seeing that they aren't lost, and ask him if he'd feel like making out a list of the titles, just to see how many songs he can remember, and which ones. If he will dictate the words to you, tell him you'll make up a typewritten booklet of them and give him a copy. Do not mention recording on disks until specifically told to do this by the Supervisor.

Never judge a folk-singer by the tonal beauty of his singing. If the tune is fairly definite and the words reasonably clear that is all that is necessary for our purposes. Often the singing that sounds most curious to our ears is the oldest and most valuable to preserve. It is important for the collector to realize that in the mind of a true folk-singer the song is of every importance, the singer of none at all. Never admire a performance, only the story of the song or the line of the melody.

Sometimes it is necessary, in order to keep your singer's goodwill, to take down songs that aren't particularly interesting, simply because they are favorites of his. Often, too, it is necessary to take down one that has been published, though the singer does not know this because he; probably, learned it by rote. Don't scorn such songs, their variation from the printed version is very interesting to students, and they should be noted down carefully. In every case we want the singer's own version of words and tune, so never correct him.

In going to call on "foreign" Californians it is almost always necessary to go in company with someone known to your performer, -- someone in whom he has confidence and whom you have interested in your project ahead of time. This should be a person able to understand your work in its historical and social aspects; so that if your performer suspects you of attempting to exploit his music commercially, your sponsor for the contact will be able to reassure him effectively. Never ask foreigners directly for the date of their arrival in the United States. Even when they are in this country legally they are often uncertain of their status and this query may ruin your contact. Usually the approximate date is easy to determine indirectly.

Your call should always have the aspect of a social visit; not a business one. Remember that 'foreign' manners are usually more formal and in general more consistent than ours; so be on your best behavior! Don't press people; treat them as collaborators. On the other hand don't allow a performer to feel that he is doing you a personal favor by allowing you to take down his songs. The undertaking requires hard and concentrated work from both of you, and the best attitude for you is

to assume that he will be glad to make the effort to get a more complete record of the history of old-time things; just as you are.

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The interview forms which follow should be studied carefully to clarify in your mind the various things we are interested to know. You are not expected to fill these out in full for every performer, but insofar as any of this information is obtainable in general conversation, without more than a few direct questions, it should be included on these forms. A performer's interest should not be exhausted in answering questions since it is infinitely more important to record his music. Never fill out these forms in the presence of the performer.

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### **CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT Form A**Circumstances of Interview

STATE

NAME OF WORKER

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

1. Name and address of performer.
2. Date and time of interview.
3. Place of Interview. (Street and number or careful directions for locating performer.)
4. Name and address of person who put you in touch with performer.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you.
6. Description of room, house, surroundings; etc., (Farm or ranch? Suburban? City residence? Single room? Flat? Double house? House-boat? Pent-house? Tent? Trailer?)
7. Who was present during the interview or during the recording? (Relatives? The performer's [Loss?]? His Americanized children?)

**CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT Form B Personal History of Performer**

STATE NAME OF WORKER

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERFORMER

1. Ancestry.
2. Native language.
3. Where born, and when? (If age of performer is not volunteered, guess it approximately and say "about 65" or "about 40").
4. Date of arrival in the U.S. ( Never ask this directly!).
5. How many generations in the U.S.? How many generations in California?
6. Places lived in, with dates.
7. Education; with dates.
8. How and from whom did performer learn to sing or play? Can he read musical notation?
9. Occupations, with dates.
10. Special skills, crafts and interests.
11. Community and religious activities, if any.

12. To what extent does the performer share in the activities of national groups, other than his own? Note racial affinities and antagonisms; if revealed. If he has a radio, determine if you can which programs he listens to.

13. Description of performer.

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**CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT**Form CText of Interview

STATE

NAME OF WORKER

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERFORMER

1. List of titles in repertoire of this performer, and his estimate of the number he knows.
2. Titles of texts dictated to interviewer.
3. Why does this performer sing or play! What kind of music does he like best? (If a singer, what kind of songs? Quote him verbatim if you can).
4. Where and when does he put his gifts to use? Underline: At home only? Among a few friends? At large parties? At club meetings? At traditional festivals or national holidays? In church or religious processions? For marching? For dancing? In contests? In dramatic productions? On the radio? (What stations and programs?). Is performer aid, and if so under what circumstances?
5. Note any evidence you have as to the community's opinion of the performer.
6. Does he play or sing more, or less, than he used to do? How has his repertoires been affected by the new environment?

7. List of titles recorded on disks, with any comments or facts offered by performer about each. (On a separate sheet).

**CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT Form D Study of Folk and National Instruments**

STATE

NAME OF WORKER

ADDRESS

DATE

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERFORMER ON INSTRUMENT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER: IF DIFFERENT

REFER TO U. C. - W. P. A. DISK NO.

1. Native name of instrument

2. English name if known.

3. Where made, and when?

4. Name and address of maker, if known.

5. Where and when did owner [?] (or performer) learn to play it?

How does he tune it? (If he can tell you)

6. How did it come into the hands of the present owner?

7. Musical use of instrument by this performer: (Underline) - Solo performance: To accompany dancing: To accompany singing? With other instruments? If [?] or invariably, played in combination with some other instruments, [?] note name of the other instruments.

8. Social use of instrument by this performer. (Underline) At home only: Among a few friends? At large parties? At club meetings: At weddings, christenings, funerals? For traditional festivals or



national holidays? In church or religious processions? For marching? For dancing? In contests? In dramatic productions? On the radio? (What stations and programs?) Is performer paid, and if so under what circumstances?

9. Interviewer's brief description of instrument.

## **CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT FORMS FOR INTERVIEWS** Form E Study of Folk and National Instruments

STATE

NAME OF WORKER

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERFORMER ON INSTRUMENT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER, IF DIFFERENT.

1. Native name of instrument.
2. English name if known.
3. Where made, and when?
4. Name and address of maker, if known.
5. How and when did it come into the hands of the present owner?
6. Where and when did present owner (or performer) learn to play it? [?] [?????]
7. Musical use of instrument: Underline - Solo performance? to accompany dancing? To accompany singing? With other instruments. If usually, or invariably, played in combination with some other instrument, note name of the other instrument.

8. Social use of instrument by this performer: At home only? Among a few friends? At large parties? At club meetings? At weddings, christenings, funerals? For traditional festivals or national holidays? In church or religious processions? For marching? For dancing? In contests? In dramatic productions? On the radio? (What stations and programs?) Is performer paid, and if so under what circumstances?

9. Further comment.

10. Interviewer's brief description of instrument.

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### General queries:

I. Pencil (4H) or ink only for handwritten cards? Blue-black ink? Indian ink? immaterial

II. Authors: In folk song collections we have followed (on cards enclosed) the indication on the title page, saying 'collected by' when the title page does (viz: Eleanor Hague, Spanish American Folk Songs) and saying merely 'by' if that is what the title page does, (Louise Pound; Barry, Eckstorm and Smyth). Is this right? Yes

III. Punctuation: Please check carefully and indicate proper usage of commas and periods on this kind of card. My information here is contradictory.

IV. How much of the original shall we duplicate on a continuation card, when information cannot all be included on a single card? Please illustrate. ???

V. Refrains: Please look up the 4 versions of The Elfin Knight in the Barry, Eckstorm and Smyth collection British Ballads from Maine, and tell me what you think the refrains should be, particularly with reference to version B.

We took "Let every rose grow merry in time." This changes to "merry and fine" which might equally well be used. The last line: "You shall be a true lover of mine" would seem to have equal rights with the other two; but I chose the first, since the latter is identical with the title and the first would seem to be bibliographically more useful. Is this the proper criterion? In the same way in Version A, I took the 2nd (and 5th) lines as the refrain instead of the 4th and 5th, because the 4th line is like the title. Does this seem right?

2



There are so many patterns for refrains in folk songs. When is a refrain a chorus? I suppose we should avoid technical literary considerations and must stick to the cataloging of the lines which [[repeated?] through?] [yes?] a song and are therefore useful bibliographically. [(Sometimes this will be a first line, sometimes a last line, sometimes two lines together.) [md] called ?] (I am referring to [repeated sections?], chorus or refrain, not to verses. Of course we will catalog the first line of the first verse in every case.) first ?]

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A Chorus [ is?] a refrain! ([Colloquialism?])

Queries on cards enclosed:

I. British Ballads from Maine: We made a separate card for the Child title, since Barry's book has an index of these; then a card for the performer's title of each of the several versions, (4 versions of the item cataloged as a sample). In Barry's text the performer's titles as distinct from Child's, is given in quotes. Should we imitate this?

II. Next we made two cards identical with the performer's title card, as above, with text of first line added above titles 3 spaces to left, on one card; text of refrain added above on the other in the same way. Should we say 'Every rose grows merry and fine, f.l. of' --- and 'Fum-a-lum, etc., refr. of' -- as we have done? Or should we omit the 'f.l.of' and 'refr. of'?

Foreign language titles: We shall not be doing many of these except for Spanish and Mexican songs. With reference to the cards made for one title from Eleanor Hague's Spanish-American Folk Songs:

I. Title card (in Spanish, or whatever the original language is). I put the English in parenthesis because Miss Hague supplies it in her index.

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Then I made a title card in English, with the Spanish title in parenthesis.

Then I repeated this performance for the first line in English, with the Spanish in (); then in Spanish with the English in (), treating the Spanish title as the main title for the first line cards. This would have been repeated for the refrain had there been one. Had the English translation of the title been [unavailable?], not given and we were able to supply it, should this have been done in brackets [] [] in the block instead of ()?

How should one indicate the language of the country of origin of the song? I put Sp. for Spanish preceding the translation of the title and first line but it looks odd, though the S. P. library has cards that look like this.

Instructions [?] workers

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles on folk music which should be familiar to anyone studying the subject, whether from the textual or musical point of view. Barry, Phillips American Ballads. Journal of American Folk Lore, vol. XXV An Essay on Tunes. Bulletin of the Folk Song Society of the Northeast, No. 5. (Not in U.C. Library but obtainable from Chicago.) The Collection of Folk-Song. JAFL, Vol. XXVII. Folk Music in America, JAFL, vol., XXII. Irish Come-All-Ye's. JAFL, vol XXIV. Native Balladry in America. JAFL, vol. XXII. The Origin of Folk Melodies. JAFL, vol. XXIII. Some Aspects of Folk-Song. JAFL, vol. XXV. The Transmission of Folk-Song. JAFL, vol. XXVII. William Carter, the Bensontown Home. JAFL, vol. XXV. American Folk Music. Southern Folklor Quarterly, vol. 1 No. 2, 1937. What is Tradition? BPSSNE, No. 1, 1930. Communal Recreation. BPSSNE, No. 5, 1933. Das Volk Dichtete Nichts. BPSSNE, No. 7, 1934. (In English.) Illiteracy a Negative Factor in Ballad Tradition. BPSSNE, No. 7, 1934. Notes on the Ways of Folk-singers with folk-tunes. BPSSNE, No. 12, 1937. Barry, Phillips; Eckstrom, Fannie Hardy; and Smyth, Mary Winslow, British Ballads from Maine. 1929. Preface very important. Campbell & Sharp, English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians. Preface to vol. 1 by Cecil Sharp is very important. Eckstrom, Fannie Hardy; and Smyth; Mary Winslow. [Minstrelsy?] of Maine. (Probably not available at [U.?] C. -- it is out of print. I own a copy which anyone is welcome to use at the project. It offers valuable information about the 'composers' of apparently anonymous folk songs, chiefly from the textual point of view, [how?] var.) [Herzog?], George. The Study of Folk Song in America. [?] given at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Folklore Association, April 1939, Chapel Hill. Southern Folklore Quarterly, June 1938. (Not in U. C. Library; may be obtained probably from a southern library on request.) Herzog, George. Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States, a survey. Published by the American Council of Learned Societies, 907 Fifteenth Street, Washington D. C. Price 25¢. Lists [?] and ms. collections and has bibliographies. [?], Arthur Psalmes. Edited by George Hergoz. Folk Tunes from Mississippi Issued by the Music Research Department, National Play Bureau, Federal Theatre Project, Works Progress Administration, New York City, 1937. (Only copy I know of is at the project. Perhaps you have one.) Musicological study of melodies very important. 2 Jackson, George Fullen. Spiritual Folk Songs of Early American. N. Y. 1937.

White spirituals from the Southern [Uplands?]. 935?

Much valuable information about the [?] of tunes. He wrote to dispute the early idea that the negro spirituals were a spontaneous creation of the negro unaffected by white culture; he traces the spirituals to texts and tunes of white hymns in the shaped-[?] hymnals. His technique is important

even where his subject is not entirely relevant to [?] study. No, one however, should escape from the study of American folk music [????] [without?] some contact with the work of Jackson, and some awareness of the existence of American folk hymns --- which have preserved some ballad tunes, incidentally.

The Barry articles are brief but are by far the most important. I have reprints of most of them. S. R.

## **CALIFORNIA FOLK MUSIC PROJECT**Instructions to workerscollating California texts and tunesBibliographical Key Words

ANTHROPOLOGY: American (Omit American Indian)

BALLADS

BROADSIDES

CALIFORNIA (Diaries, histories - pioneer period and early Spanish and Mexican mining, lumbering, [hides?], fishing, etc.)

CHANTS (Mission chants; work chants)

CHANTEYS or SHANTIES

DANCES: Country, Square, Figure

ETHNOLOGY (Omit American Indian).

FESTIVALS: Folk, Music, Dance, Traditional, Seasonal [?] Easter, Harvest, Midsummer, etc)

FIDDLE (Fiddle tunes as accompaniment to [?])

FOLK: Songs, Dances, Music Festivals [?]

GAMES: Singing, Play Party.

HYMNS: Folk, Traditional

HYMNALS: Shaped-note.

INSTRUMENTS: Guitar, Dulcimer, Banjo [?] (or Violin)

MISSIONS: California, Music in, Spanish. (In this [?] about Indians should be included [?] trained to sing or play at the Missions [??] Padres)

MUSIC: Folk, American, National, Traditional

PAMPHLETS: (Individual songs are frequently bound as [??])

SINGING MASTERS (Itinerant singing teachers was held [??] about the country two weeks at a time [??] connectin with the churches.)

Bibliographi cal Key Words continued

SONGS: Folk, National, Traditional, Sailor, Pioneer, Cowboy, Lumberjack, Hobo, Miner, Railroad, River, Workers', I.W.W., Fishing, Bandit, Prison, etc.

Note: Poems are often published under titles bearing the word 'Songs' but these are not relevant unless there is proof that they were actually sung.)

SONGSTERS (Books of collected song texts)

WEST

FAR WEST

WORK SONGS (tie-tamping, pile-driving, etc.)